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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a pilot program that utilizes the summer schools of local school districts as sites for student teaching. The students undertake paid supervised teaching activities in selected public summer programs offering both remedial and enrichment programs. The major rationale offered for this program is that it frees time during the regular school year for teacher candidates to meet their academic course requirements. This report, written at the conclusion of the first summer of the project, is organized as follows: (1) a brief description of the project; (2) a description of the training offered the On-Site Teacher Educators; (3) a section on perceived strengths and weaknesses of the project; and (4) a summary of what has been learned to date. (JD)

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SALEM COLLEGE
MODEL SUMMER-SCHOOL
STUDENT TEACHING PROGRAM
FIRST YEAR REPORT

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SALEM COLLEGE

MODEL SUMMER-SCHOOL STUDENT TEACHING PROGRAM

Introduction

In response to the report of the Task Force on the Preparation of Teachers, the 1987 North Carolina General Assembly appropriated funds to the Board of Governors to initiate pilot programs that would utilize the summer schools of local school districts as sites for student teaching. Recommendation #9 of the Task Force report suggests:

> That greater use be made of the summer periods after the sophomore, junior, and senior years of college when many teacher education students can undertake paid supervised teaching activities in selected public

school summer programs offered by local school systems under the Basic Education Program.

The major rationale offered for this recommendation was that it would free time during the regular school year for students to meet their academic course requirements. Finding ways to provide more time for students during the school year was considered necessary to help colleges/universities meet another task force recommendation that all teacher education students have a second major.

Salem College, with a long history of requiring a major in an academic discipline in addition to the teacher education program, became uniquely interested in exploring the summer school alternative. The College also was fortunate in that the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools has an established summer school program for both remedial and enrichment purposes. The College and the school system collaboratively developed and submitted a proposal. This proposal was funded for the 1988-89 academic year.

This interim report is being written by the Project Director at the conclusion of the first summer of the project. The report is organized as follows: first, a brief description of the project; second, a description of the training offered the On-Site Teacher Educators; third, a section on perceived strengths and weaknesses of the project; and fourth, a summary of what has been learned to date.

Description of Program

Besides the use of the summer school program, there are several other innovative facets to this project. The first is the use of two consecutive summers to carry out the traditional student teaching assignment. This was considered necessary as local summer school programs are only of five weeks duration and traditionally student teaching is a ten week experience.

During the first summer the student teacher was to be placed in the remedial or Basic Education Program. The Basic Education Program is designed for students who are either being retained or who have scored on the 25th percentile or below on the California Achievement Test. During the second summer the student was to be placed in the Enrichment Program. This program is designed to simulate and challenge pupils to extend their knowledge of language, mathematics, and the fine arts. By experiencing two different styles of teaching, as well as two different grade and developmental levels, the student teacher would have a more varied experience than is currently possible. It was hypothesized that the opportunity to work with two different teachers would encourage the student teacher to develop a more flexible teaching style.

A second difference was the use of On-Site Teacher Educators as supervisors for student teachers. The On-Site

Teacher Educators were local teachers trained to take increased responsibility in the supervision of the student teachers. A Program Coordinator who is a school system employee and an adjunct professor at Salem College was employed to provide on-going support and assistance to the On-Site Teacher Educators. The Program Coordinator made weekly visits to each teacher at his/her school site to provide whatever assistance was needed. Additionally, as part of the project, the On-Site Teacher Educators were required to meet weekly with the Program Coordinator to share concerns and to further refine their supervisory skills.

Another difference from the traditional student teaching program was the decision to employ a school system guidance counselor to provide weekly support groups for the student teachers. The student teachers also met three times during the five weeks with a Salem College faculty member to help the students make the transition from theory to practice. The project's organization is illustrated in Table 1.

During the first year of the project, thirteen student teachers participated--eight in Elementary Education, three in Learning Disabilities, one in Emotionally Handicapped, and one in Secondary Social Studies. The thirteen students represented the following populations: 3 traditional-age undergraduate students who had just completed their junior

years, 3 adult degree students, 6 college graduates seeking certification only, and 1 Master of Arts in Teaching student.

While the original idea was to place all of the elementary students in the Basic Education Program during the first summer, this was not done. Two students seeking elementary certification began in the enrichment program. Since there was only one class in Learning Disabilities offered by the school system, three student teachers in Learning Disabilities shared the same classroom and On-Site Teacher Educator. There are no summer school classes offered for students classified as Emotionally Handicapped by the school system, but the Forsyth County Mental Health Agency does offer a school-based six week program. The student teacher seeking certification in this area was placed with the mental health program.

The grant provided funds to pay a stipend to each of the student teachers and the On-Site Teacher Educators who participated in the project.

Training for the On-Site Teacher Educators

To the extent possible, On-Site Teacher Educators were selected who had already completed some form of mentor training and who also had completed the assessment module on the North Carolina Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument. Actually, about half of the teachers selected had had training in both areas. Therefore, the workshop designed for the On-Site Teacher Educators had to provide both the basics and enrichment.

The workshop was planned for the two days prior to the beginning of summer school. Because of snow days the first day of the workshop was actually the teacher's last day of the 88-89 school year.

The following topics were covered during the two day workshop:

1. Background information on the summer school student teaching project--funding and organizational structure.
2. Background information on Salem College's teacher education program.
3. Differences between summer school and the regular school year with regard to student teaching.
4. Responsibilities of On-Site Teacher Educators (See Table 2).

Table 2.

Responsibilities of the On-Site Teacher Educator

1. Orient student teacher to persons, places, and policies.
2. Demonstrate teaching and management strategies.
3. Assist the student teacher in planning for instruction and locating resources (both persons and materials) within the school environment.
4. Provide on-going support for the student teacher.
5. Schedule the student teacher to gradually assume the responsibilities of teaching. Use the cycle of experience.
6. Provide informal and formal feedback to the student teacher regarding instructional and management practices.
7. Assist the student teacher in reflecting upon her/his experience.
8. Provide for formative and summative evaluation of the student teacher. Complete weekly and final evaluation instrument.
9. Meet weekly with the Program Coordinator.

5. Concerns of student teachers and the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM).
6. Adult development theory.
7. Communication skills, in particular the use of active listening.
8. An introduction to the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument.

The highlight of the two day workshop was a panel of student teachers (Fall '89) who were asked to share with the On-Site Teacher Educators their concerns and hopes for their student teaching experience. The response of the On-Site Teacher Educators to the students' hopes and fears was genuine and heartfelt.

On the second day of the workshop, the summer school student teachers joined the On-Site Teacher Educators for lunch and a relationship-building conference.

The development of mentoring/supervisory skills was continued during the teachers' weekly meetings with the Program Coordinator. Topics covered during these weekly meetings were: conducting post conferences; developmental supervision, i.e., direct, collaborative, and non-directive conferences; different types of observation instruments; and practice in using the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument. During the last session, the Program Coordinator helped the On-Site Teacher Educators complete the final evaluation instrument for the student teacher.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths:

1. The small size of the classes of the Basic Education Program (BEP) provided the student teachers with a micro-laboratory setting. This is consistent with the Joyce and Showers training model that students or teachers learning a new skill first study the rationale for the new strategy, then see it demonstrated, and next be provided with small group situations in which to practice. The small size of the classes also encouraged flexibility in teaching styles and creative teaching methods. For example, several teachers in the BEP program were using math manipulatives with their students.
2. Next summer the settings will be reversed, i.e., BEP and enrichment, providing students with a variety of settings and student populations.
3. The weekly support groups with the guidance counselor were highly valued by the students as an opportunity to share concerns and experiences.
4. The On-Site Teacher Educators were most appreciative of the two day training session prior to the beginning of summer school. One On-Site Teacher Educator said that she had supervised many

student teachers for a variety of colleges and that this was the first time someone told her what they expected and gave her any assistance. The workshop also helped establish lines of communication between the college and the teachers that will continue long after the project ends.

5. The Program Coordinator was an administrator in the local school system and an adjunct faculty member at Salem College. Her knowledge of both environments and the expectations each had for the students was a decided advantage.
6. Early in the project, weekly staff meetings were initiated between the Project Director, Program Coordinator, guidance counselor, and Salem faculty member. This increase in communciation allowed the staff to handle incipient problems before they became full blown.
7. The flexibility this program offers students is significant. Some students work during the day throughout the academic year; this program allows them to maintain their jobs and still meet their student teaching requirements. Other students have demanding majors that take so much of their time during the academic year that they would have had to return to Salem for a ninth semester to student teach.

8. The weekly meetings between the Program Coordinator and the On-Site Teacher Educators were benefical in three ways: first, they provided time to continue to build supervisory skills; second, they provided on-going motivation to the On-Site Teacher Educators to assist the student teachers as much as possible; and third, they provided for accountibility.
9. The student teachers in the BEP had the opportunity to substantially increase their knowledge of the low achieving student and how to work successfully with this student.
10. Finally, and perhaps the most significant strength of this program is the time span between student teaching experiences. The student teachers have a year to reflect upon their experiences and to develop new skills that will allow them to increase their effectiveness next summer.

Weaknesses:

1. The question still remains unanswered as to whether students successful with 10 to 12 BEP students will be able to transfer those skills to a more heterogeneous class of 25 to 30. On the other hand, the BEP students could be considered the most difficult students to teach and if one

can be successful with them, perhaps, the full classroom will not be so difficult. Also, the enrichment classes do have 25 to 30 students, and all elementary student teachers will have an opportunity to student teach in the enrichment program next year.

2. Opportunities for the student teachers in Learning Disabilities were limited as there was only one Learning Disabilities class offered systemwide. Therefore, three student teachers worked with one On-Site Teacher Educator and thirteen students.
3. The student teachers felt a need for the Program Coordinator to observe them and to provide them with feedback in addition to the feedback they received from the On-Site Teacher Educators. This increased the amount of time that the Program Coordinator gave to the project.
4. The student teachers expressed a need to meet weekly with the Program Coordinator as well as the guidance counselor for more concrete feedback on their teaching.
5. Timing was a problem for teachers and student teachers in the enrichment program. The two day workshop immediately preceded the students' arrival giving the teachers and student teachers little time for planning.

6. There was no orientation for the student teachers as to the characteristics of the students that they would be teaching or the philosophy of the summer school program. The student teachers knew that they would be working with low achieving students, but they were unable to fully anticipate the degree and kinds of problems these children have.
7. There was difficulty in meeting the students' grade level preferences as teachers were selected to participate in this project before their teaching assignments were known.

What We Have Learned

This project underscored again the importance of selecting the best and most motivated teachers to be the On-Site Teacher Educators. The quality of the student teachers' experience was in direct relationship to the quality of the On-Site Teacher Educators. Next year, the college will redouble its efforts to select the best and most committed teachers to participate as On-Site Teacher Educators.

It is not clear at this time whether the summer school program is an acceptable alternative for student teaching. That question must be held until the students have finished two summers and have begun their teaching. Positive aspects of the summer school program are the more relaxed atmosphere, the smaller classes, and the opportunity to be more creative. These same factors could also be perceived as limitations.

In regard to the increased responsibility for supervision given to the teachers, some reluctance was noted on their part to assume full responsibility for the supervision of the student teachers. They welcomed the Program Coordinator's offer to observe the student teacher and to assist in evaluation. It is not clear if a shared governance model in the supervision of student teachers is more appropriate, or, if after this summer's experience, the

On-Site Teacher Educators will feel more confident. Many of this year's On-Site Teacher Educators will be asked to participate again next year.

Given the student teachers' need for more contact with the college, weekly meetings between the student teachers and the Program Coordinator will be required next year. Meetings with the guidance counselor will be continued. Additionally, meetings between the On-Site Teacher Educators and the Program Coordinator will be continued. All of these meetings will be scheduled for longer time periods and earlier in the week.

The weekly staff meetings were invaluable and will be built into the schedule.

The two day workshop was extremely beneficial for everyone and will be continued. Every effort will be made to schedule the workshop earlier next year to give teachers in the enrichment program more planning time. New On-Site Teacher Educators will be required to attend the entire two day workshop; return On-Site Teacher Educators will need to attend only one day.

A one day orientation for student teachers, probably at the end of the spring term will be scheduled.

The student teachers in Learning Disabilities will be placed in BEP classrooms next year to give them an opportunity to do more structured large group lessons. This is reasonable given that BEP students share some of the

characteristics of the Learning Disabled. Students in the BEP classes this year will be placed in the enrichment program next year, and vice-versa.

Students in the summer school student teaching program will be encouraged to either spend their January term in a classroom environment related to their teaching area, or to complete 40-50 hours of additional observation and tutoring in the classroom during the school year.

Finally, novices in any field need a great deal of support and assistance in the initial stages of learning. Even though this project provided more support for the student teacher than that found in many traditional teacher education programs, the students desired more. We continue to underestimate the anxiety and frustration experienced by the beginning teacher and the need for continuous feedback. The model proposed for next year with weekly meetings between the student teachers and the coordinator and counselor combined with weekly visits by the coordinator to the students' classrooms is probably the minimum in supervision that all students should receive. The student teaching experience needs to become more salient in the eyes of administrators and teacher educators.